S: Edmonds C-5 (1923, 1945) 1957. MA11 Kurd MA11

Insofar as these grievances had some foundation in fact enough has already been said to show that the prevailing state of affairs was due, in part at any rate, to political circumstances beyond the control of the government, and in part to the restiveness of the Kurds themselves which for long periods had brought the administration in a large part of Kurdistan to a standstill. Some of the neglect, too, was undoubtedly due not to malice but to a tendency, not unknown elsewhere, for the higher authorities to take more thought for the parts of the country near the center than for the distant outposts.

However that may be, the result was that just when the earlier agitators were developing into elder statesmen who, schooled by experience, no longer regarded separation as feasible or desirable there was growing up a new generation nurtured on a sense of grievance and frustration. Resentment was further embittered by insulting references to the minorities not infrequently made by pan-Arab orators in moments of fanatical exaltation. In all the countries of the Middle East the western Powers are regarded as the supporters of the old reactionary Beys and Pashas who have retained most of the political power in their own hands (the charge is unfair but it would perhaps take us too widely to examine it here). It is only to be expected, then, that disgruntled youth (and especially young Kurds with a racial added to a social grievance) should look to Russia for its inspiration. The Russians have long been the neighbours of the Kurds through the Caucasian provinces, and, as we have seen, a small part of Kurdistan lies within the boundaries of the Soviet Union. Even before 1918 Kurdish malcontents in Turkey and Persia were accustomed to seek support from the Russians. For the Russian exploitation of Kurdish unrest would be nothing new, indeed something of the kind has been seen comparatively recently at the time of the short-lived 'Kurdish Republic' of Mahabad in Persian Kurdistan, and again in 1947 when Mulla Mustafa of Barzan, a fugitive rebel from Iraq, was welcomed in Soviet Armenia, given high military rank, and encouraged to broadcast in Kurdish from Erivan.

But with every year that passes any concerted armed revolt becomes more improbable. The nomadic chiefs, realizing as they do that economically the Kurdish north is bound hand and foot to Baghdad, have never shown any enthusiasm for anything but the mildest form of secession, and the programme of development now in hand must have the effect of binding the whole country together more closely than ever before. The old loyalties to religious Shaykhs and tribal Aghas have been too deeply undermined for any self-appointed leader to command a serious measure of support in any violent adventure. The complexity of modern weapons has given the government an overwhelming advantage

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children into silence by threatening them with the word "Russian."

The Soviets tried hard to counteract this unreceptive attitude. They played up "Kurdish autonomy" in the Soviet Union, and the brave deeds of one Sarvard Siamandov, Red Army colonel of Kurdish origin, "Hero of Leningrad." How much success they had is hard to judge, but certainly large sections of the population, as well as landlords, merchants, and religious leaders, continued to distrust them and to extend this distrust to Qazi Mohammad, whose connection with the Soviets was undeniable. The walls of the building in which his government was housed were plastered solidly with Soviet propaganda posters; his newspapers and magazines contained a large proportion of Soviet material translated word for word into Kurdish; and his poets composed panegyrics to Stalin and the Red Army.

Yet in contrast to the rest of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan was to outside appearances free of Soviet agents. Aside from a few Iranian servants truck drivers, who acted as observers for the Soviet and pro-Soviet governments, Soviet citizens were almost unknown in the area and Soviet agents kept under cover. There was said to be a Soviet representative in residence in Mahabad, though his presence was denied by Kurdish authorities.* Hashemov, Soviet Consul in Rezaieh, and his assistant Aliakbarov made occasional trips to Mahabad.

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While terrorism reigned unchecked in eastern Azerbaijan, in Kurdistan there were few if any political prisoners and only one or two cases of what may have been political assassination, though a number of Kurds not in sympathy with the regime did flee to Tehran. In the streets of Mahabad one could hear radio broadcasts from Ankara or London, while in Tabriz to listen to these brought the death penalty. Whether the reason for this freedom was the moderation and liberalism of Qazi and his cabinet, or the presence of the tribes who would not tolerate violent action against persons connected with them, the net result was to make the regime popular at least among the citizens of Mahabad, who enjoyed their respite from the exactions and oppression they

* The last of these Soviet officials, one Tsarkov, is said to have been in Mahabad until the last days of the republic, when he fled to the Soviet Consulate in Tabriz.

In Roosevelt G-5 (1945-1947) 1947 MAII Kurd MAII
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641 considered to be characteristic of the central Iranian Government.

OPPOSITION OF THE TRIBES

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177 If the Soviets kept their overt interference to a minimum in order to reconcile the tribes to the regime, they were certainly unsuccessful. In addition to historical, social, and religious reasons for the tribes' opposition to the Soviet-supported government, there were strong economic ones. The Kurdish tribesmen depended largely on their tobacco crop for their livelihood, and now that their market in the rest of Iran was cut off they suffered considerable hardship. In certain areas food supplies already received had to be shared with the destitute Barzanis, who had long outworn their welcome.

This tribal discontent was at its strongest in the south, where the distrusted Qarawul Agha's son, Mam Amin, chief of the Mamash, along with his ally, Beyazid Agha of the Mangur, so openly opposed Qazi Mohammad that the Soviet vice-consul finally came down from Rowanduz and threatened to have the Barzanis sent against them. When Mam Amin continued to resist, the Barzanis did indeed attack him and he was forced to flee to Iraq with some of his tribesmen. From Rowanduz north, the tribes looked to the leadership of Amir Khan Shikak, who had resigned from his position in Qazi's government as minister of war and for the time being was keeping aloof in Zivilanlar, his ancestral capital southwest of Shulgara. The only tribes Qazi Mohammad could count on were the Gawarik of Mahabad, numbering less than a thousand armed men, and part of the small tribe of Zarza, in the Ushnuiah region. Even Mulla Mustafa and his Barzanis did not get on with Qazi Mohammad, who was no longer able to feed them.

668 Thus it was that Qazi Mohammad, in the face of the increasingly aggressive attitude of the Tehran Government, found himself almost without support. Despite Soviet promises of aid and material, in the fall of 1946 Qazi Mohammad was still without either heavy weapons or trained men, or indeed any effective army at all. As Iranian preparations became increasingly obvious, Qazi sent frantic messages to the tribes, his only hope, any-

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reminding the listener of a bagpipe and has often a plaintive air. The Kurdish dancing, however, is by no means as strenuous as Scottish. Kurds and all other mountain dwellers in Kurdistan dance what is known as the chain-dance, similar to that which is, I believe, commonly seen in the Balkans. The dancers join hands and form a ring. The piper and a drummer with a sort of snare drum stand in the middle, and the dance consists of fairly intricate footwork while the circle moves slowly round. Often one dancers who fancy themselves as budding Nijinskys do solo dances inside the circle. Amongst the Kurds the men and women dance separately, but with the Christian sects the two sexes dance together. This does not mean, however, that Kurdish women are completely segregated or kept by themselves. As a matter of fact, they possess considerable freedom and may be seen gathering firewood, tending animals or engaged in other tasks on the mountainside, often far from their villages.

Up to five years ago the Barzan district of Kurdistan retained all of its savage and primitive features. Government had not penetrated and Shaikh Ahmed, a religious fanatic, was dictator. With the help of his brothers and a standing army of several hundred men he completely dominated the impoverished inhabitants, who had the shaikh's bodyguard perpetually billeted on them and who had to provide them with food, clothing and tobacco and anything else they might fancy. Any protests on the part of the villagers were discouraged by the strongest methods. Such complete ascendancy did Shaikh Ahmed gain over his savage and illiterate people that they began to look upon him as a god and, though Moslems in name, turned their faces towards him in prayer rather than towards Mecca, as tradition demands. There was a Mullah in the district called Mullah Jaj, who represented himself to be the prophet of this new god. The Mullah was a very fiery and eloquent speaker and, unfortunately for himself, his fame began to surpass even that of the deity. This could not of course be tolerated, and one of Shaikh Ahmed's brothers "bumped off" the presumptuous prophet. Up to that time the Koran had been revered, but now the Shaikh issued orders for the destruction of all copies to be found. He also withdrew the ban on the eating of pork, for wild pig were plentiful in Barzan. Armed missionaries were sent out beyond the Barzan bounds, and villages which refused to accept the Shaikh were burned and a number of the male inhabitants put to death. This state of affairs could not be allowed to continue, and the Iraq Government was forced to take action in conjunction with the British Royal Air Force.